GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2830
ANSWERED ON:05.12.2007
INTER ISLAND CONNECTIVITY
Kharventhan Shri Salarapatty Kuppusamy

Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the poor Inter-island connectivity is creating problems to the people;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the steps taken by the Government to improve the same;

(d) whether the Government proposes to start ferry links service with neighbouring countries; and

(e) if so, the details thereof ?

Answer

MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU)

(a) to (c): Presently, the inter-island connectivity in the Union Territory of Lakshadweep is maintained with 2x100 passenger vessels. The 5 vessels operating in the island-mainland sector are also being utilized for inter-island connectivity during the voyage. During monsoon period from May to September all fair-weather and inter-island vessels are withdrawn from service and hence the inter-island passengers mainly depend on the two all-weather vessels. Due to non-availability of any other transport, helicopter service connecting Capital island, Kavaratti with all inhabited islands is also put into operation during the monsoon period. During fair-weather season all the vessels operate and accordingly, the movement of passengers in the inter-island sector do not suffer much.

Keeping in view the long term shipping requirement in Lakshadweep sector, 6 passenger vessels of different sizes under 15 Years Perspective Plan and 4 passenger inter-island high speed vessels under PMGSY Scheme have been recommended for acquisition. Out of these, 3x150 and 1x15 passenger vessels have been delivered this year. The construction of the 3x50 passenger vessels has been completed and the delivery is expected in December, 2007. Contracts have been signed for construction of 2x250 passenger-cum-100 M.T. cargo vessel with M/s. Colombo Dockyard Limited and as per the contract the vessels are to be delivered by 2nd January, 2010 and 2nd July, 2010 respectively. One more 400 passenger vessel is also being considered for acquisition by the Government.

As regards Andaman and Nicobar islands, presently, there are 5 vessels plying in inter-island sector. The frequency to the southern group of islands has increased from an average of 3 times a month in the past to 6 − 9 times a month at present. The foreshore sector is serviced by 16 vessels and the frequency has increased as compared to the past.

Government is aware of the need for augmentation of the fleet size to meet the requirement of increased passenger traffic flow on this sector. 4 new vessels are under construction at various shipyards out of which two vessels are at advanced stage of construction and likely to be inducted sometime in 2008. In addition, acquisition of 4 vessels in the inter-island sector and 3 vessels in the foreshore sector has been recommended recently to meet the increased traffic flow.

(d) & (e): No such proposal is under consideration at present.